(ग) और (घ) अनुमान है कि वर्ष 1991–92 में अखबारी कागज की कुल मांग 5.85 लाख मीट्रिक टन होगी। जबकि 1991–92 में देश में अखबारी कागज के 2.95 लाख मीट्रिक टन उत्पादन का अनुमान है। यह कमी विदेशी मुद्रा की उपलब्धता के अनुसार आयात द्वारा पूरी की जाएगी।

Legislation to amend Prasar Bharati Bill

*91. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

SMT. VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring forward any legislation to amend the Prasar Bharati Bill; and

(b) if so, main modifications proposed to be made and reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUM. GIRIJA VYAS): (a) Yes Sir, if necessary.

(b) It is not possible at this stage to spell out the details of such amendments. The Government is committed to set up the Prasar Bharati and to introduce competition in the electronic media.

Main Battle Tank Project

*92. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Main Battle Tank Project is nowhere near completion as reported in a newsitem in Sunday Times dated June 16, 1991;

(b) if so, the total amount spent so far on this project; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to expedite the project?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir. Main Battle Tank (MBT) Project is in an advanced stage of development. So far twelve prototypes of MBT have been fabricated which are undergoing trials. Orders for six pre-production series tanks have also been placed.

(b) The amount of money spent on the project is Rs. 203.71 crores including the commitments made as on 31 Mar. 1991.

(c) Does not arise, in view of reply to part (a).

Growing sickness in the small scale industries sector

*93. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the growing sickness in the small scale industries sector in the country;

(b) if so, the number of such units which became sick during the last two years alongwith the reasons for their sickness; and

(c) what are the measures taken to make them economically viable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI P. J. KURIEN): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Data on sickness are compiled by the Reserve Bank of India. Latest data regarding sick small scale industrial units are available up to December 1988. The number of sick small scale industrial units at the end of December 1987; and

December 1988 was 204259 and 240573 respectively.

A number of causes, both internal and external, often operating in combination have been responsible for sickness in the small scale sector. Some of the identified major causes of sickness in the small scale sector are paucity of adequate raw materials and working capital, delayed realisation of receivables, particularly from large units, marketing problems, management deficiencies, technological obsclescence, frequent power cuts/strippings, labour problems, etc.

(c) Steps taken to revive sick units include issuance of detailed guidelines by RBI to all scheduled commercial banks in regard to rehabilitation of sick units in the small scale sector with specific reference to definition of sick SSI units, viability norms, incipient sickness as also reliefs and concessions from banks/financial institutions for implementation of rehabilitation packages in the case of potentially viable sick units.

On the advice of the Government of India, Reserve Bank of India has set up State Level Inter-Institutional Committees (SLIICs) in all States under the chairmanship of Secretary, Industries Department for working out a rehabilitation package for revival of viable sick small scale units.

Increase in prices of cement

*94. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of increase in prices of cement registered since December 1989, with details of the retail and wholesale cement prices as on December, 1989, and July, 1991;

(b) what are the reasons for increase in prices of cement;

(c) the extent of increase in cost of production thereof, and how much of the increased cost, if any, has been absorbed by the industry and how much passed on to be consumer; and

(d) what steps Government have taken or are taking to reduce the prices of cement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI P. J. KURIEN): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) A Statement showing the retail prices of cement per bag of 50 Kgs. as on December, 1989 and July, 1991 at four metropolitan cities is given in the Annexure (*See* below). During this period the increase in retail prices of cement varied from Rs. 17/- to Rs. 46/- per bag. As regards wholesale prices, on an average, the prices were lower than the retail prices by Rs. 3/- to Rs. 6/- per bag.

(b) The main reasons for price rise are as under:—

(i) Regional imbalances in the demand and availability of cement;

(ii) Rising cost of inputs and distribution costs;

(iii) Localised infrastructure and production constraints.

(c) The actual cost of production varies from region to region and from one cement unit to another. At present, there is no control on price and distribution of cement. Under these circumstances, it is not practicable to assess as to how much of increased cost of production has been absorbed by the producers.

(d) It is the constant endeavour of the Government to maximise cement production and ensure its availability to the consumers at reasonable prices. Government is closely monitoring the availability of coal, railway wagons and other infrastructural support to the cement industry and remedial action is taken wherever necessary.